

Denver Conversion Therapy Ban

- This bill will protect LGBTQ youth from dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.
- Conversion therapy is based on the false claim that being LGBTQ is a mental illness that needs to be cured. This view and the practice have been rejected as scientifically invalid by every major medical and mental health group for decades.
- These harmful practices use rejection, shame, and psychological abuse to force young people to try to change who they are. They can lead to depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, and even suicide.
- This bill is aimed at state-licensed therapists, operating their practice in the City and County of Denver, who are falsely claiming that being gay or transgender is a mental illness, and therefore taking advantage of parents and harming vulnerable youth.

The Practice of Conversion Therapy

- Conversion therapy – sometimes referred to as “reparative therapy,” “ex-gay therapy,” or “sexual orientation change efforts” – includes a range of dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing a person’s sexual orientation or suppressing a person’s gender identity.
- These harmful practices are based on the false claim that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer is a mental illness that should be cured. Every mainstream mental health and medical professional association in the country has rejected this view as scientifically invalid.
- The American Psychological Association “advises parents, guardians, young people and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder.” Additionally, the American Medical Association “opposes the use of ‘reparative’ or ‘conversion’ therapy that is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder.”

The Bill

- This municipal ban will prohibit state-licensed mental health care providers in Colorado from practicing conversion therapy on youth under the age of 18.
- This bill will help young people receive mental health care that is ethical and affirming.
- This bill will have no impact on religious or non-licensed counseling services.
 - This municipal ban only applies to mental health care providers licensed by the state of Colorado.
 - Pastors and clergy who engage in the practice of religious ministry – even if they are licensed by the state – are exempted in Colorado law as long as they are not holding themselves out as a licensee at the time of religious ministry. See C.R.S. § 12-43-215(1).